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ABSTRACT

Three competing models for public school improvement are described as points of reference. The technical transfer model of school reform focuses on how to better transfer knowledge already in the possession of academics. Placing the locus of authority in the classroom is the main issue of the professionalization model for school improvement. The client empowerment model for reform gives authority to the consumers of education. Underlying these views is the effort to restructure schools and school systems. Three separate approaches that make up the general category of school restructuring are: (1) enhancing teacher professionalization by rethinking teacher preparation and advocating empowerment; (2) using competition pressures to improve schools via enrollment choice, and (3) implementing parent-dominated school-based management. Examples of each approach in Chicago and other areas are given. School-based management was established in Chicago during 1988 with a set of 5-year goals such as improving student achievement and improving attendance and graduation rates. A similar program of local school management was established in Great Britain in 1986 and 1988. Both reforms are based in legal mandates imposed upon local education agencies. Common themes in the educational reforms enacted for Chicago and Great Britain include a concern for the disadvantaged and budget control, although differences such as curriculum diversity and budgetary approaches do exist. Issues in comparing approaches to school-based management encompass criteria for judging program success; the roles of professionals, clients, and students; and the locus of authority. (28 references) (EJS)

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Chicago and Britain: Experiments in Empowering Parents

G. Alfred Hess, Jr.
CHICAGO PANEL ON PUBLIC SCHOOL POLICY AND FINANCE

I. The Second Wave of Reform: Restructuring Schools

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I. The Second Wave of Reform: Restructuring Schools

Richard Elmore (1988) has suggested that there are three competing models for how public schools might be improved: the technical transfer model, the professionalization model, and the client empowerment model. Under the technical transfer model, academics claim to have a body of knowledge about teaching and learning which would meet the need for improvement, if only they could get professionals to adequately implement what is already known. To the extent that public schools do not practice what is already known, it is because school bureaucracies or individual teachers are rejecting better ways of doing schooling. Under this model, the issue is how to better transfer the knowledge now in the possession of academics. It might be said that the ultimate test of this model is now occurring in Chelsea, Massachusetts where Boston University is operating the school system under a ten year management contract from the Chelsea School Committee.

The professionalization model emphasizes the expert knowledge of teachers in the classroom, who know from first hand experience what needs to be done to improve their schools. Academic expertise is seen to be complex and not always rooted in the realities of day to day classroom experience. Under this model, the reason that schools do not perform well is that they do not have the level of organization needed to sustain professional involvement. The locus of authority should be in the classroom, where teachers are in contact with children. If the bureaucrats would stay out of the way, the teachers would get the job done.

Under the client driven model, schools are seen to be too professionally oriented, protecting the interests of the educators at the expense of the students. Technical knowledge is seen to be too distant from the real life situations of enrolled pupils. School structures need to be ventilated through community governance or client choice of where to enroll. Ventilating the system is necessary in order to prevent professionals from coopting parents. Under this model, authority should be vested in the consumer of education or in a corporate representative of the consumers in a community.

Crosscutting these approaches to deriving strategies to improve schools is the effort to restructure schools and school systems. There are really three quite separate approaches which have been grouped together under the general category of "restructuring". The first is the effort to enhance teacher professionalization. The second and third are two different aspects of Elmore's client driven model: enrollment choice and parent-dominated school based management. Some scholars may prefer to link teacher empowerment and parent empowerment under the school based management rubric, arguing that the shared decision making aspect of professionalization is similar to school based management under parent control, but it seems that this unduly narrows the scope of efforts to improve teaching and dilutes the importance of lay control.

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A. Enhancing Teacher Professionalization

There are a number of different efforts which loosely hang together under the category of improving the quality of teaching in local schools. Two major reports have been issued in this arena. The first, *Tomorrow's Teachers*, issued by the Holmes Group (1986), is focused upon rethinking the preparation for teaching offered by schools of education. The Holmes Group is composed of leaders of major universities who have committed themselves to revamping their teacher education programs. This is restructuring of a part of the education system which is not always adequately considered in the school reform debates, but which could have long range implications for one of the major "input" variables in the education equation. It can also be understood as an element in the technical transfer strategy of school improvement.

The second report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* was produced by the Carnegie Forum's (1986) Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. To the concern about teacher preparation, this report adds efforts to empower teachers, advocating for greater teacher control over the teaching process and a share in school level decision making. It proposes a new category of Lead Teachers as the focus for more collegial responsibility by teachers for the entire school and its programs. It calls for significantly higher salaries and more paraprofessional support staff to enhance the professionalism of teaching. The report also calls for a national certification process to recognize outstanding teachers, similar to national certification in various medical specialties. With support from the federal government, a coalition of educators is currently laying the foundation to establish a national certification board by the mid-1990s.

Several efforts have been made to enhance the professional empowerment of teachers in large urban school systems. In each of these efforts, local units of the American Federation of Teachers have been instrumental. As part of the first wave of reform, teachers in Toledo agreed to a Peer Review process to enhance professional accountability. In Toledo, mentor teachers have been created to participate in the assessment of teacher performance and to guide a process of remediation for those teachers whose performance is judged to be unsatisfactory. Teachers who do not improve under the remediation program may be counselled out of the profession or ultimately dismissed. Other states, like Illinois, copied the Toledo Plan in watered down versions, thus far without demonstrable effect on teacher performance.

Much more successful has been Pittsburgh's efforts to improve the quality of teaching in its system. In a revolutionary staff development program adopted by the Board of Education in consultation with the teachers union, one high school was designated as a clinical training site (Wallace, 1986). Successive cohorts of forty-eight secondary teachers from across the system went to the Schenley Teacher Training Center for an eight week sabbatical, during which they were updated on the latest developments in their own particular disciplines and in adolescent psychology, were exposed to related real world contexts of employment (e.g., externships in an electronics laboratory for physics teachers

or at a magazine for English instructors), and spent a three week period under intense pedagogical mentoring from master teachers assigned to Schenley High School. Over four years, all high school teachers in the system went through the Schenley Center. Closely monitored by the system's research department, the program was evaluated as highly successful in improving the teaching abilities of the system's veteran faculty (Denton & LeMahieu, 1985). The program was replicated at both the primary and intermediate grades. Combined with a realignment of the curriculum across the system, Pittsburgh's efforts were rewarded with regularly increasing median test scores on nationally standardized tests. To sustain the improvement, Pittsburgh entered upon a second phase, entitled the Centers of Excellence Program. The COE program was designed to "...institutionalize shared decision-making and school-based professional development" (Johnston, Bikel, & Wallace, 1990).

Earlier experiments with shared decision making had been launched in Hammond, Indiana and Dade County, Florida. Hammond is a small city adjacent to Chicago, but across the state line. The Dade County Public Schools serve the students of Miami and its neighboring suburbs. The Dade County school system trails only New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago in total enrollment. In both of these school systems, primarily at the instigation of the teachers union president, school based management, in the form of shared decision making, was included in the contract negotiated between the union and the Board of Education.

Pioneered in Hammond, where all schools now participate (O'Rourke, 1987), the school based management/shared decision making model has been copied in Dade County, where nearly a third of the schools were voluntarily involved in the fourth year of implementation. Under the Hammond and Dade County models, schools which wished to volunteer were encouraged to create School Improvement Councils composed primarily of the principal and teachers. Some parents were involved. Originally, the faculty had to vote to participate (winning a two-thirds majority) and the principal had to be supportive. Schools were provided few new resources but were given permission to seek waivers of either contract provisions or Board rules and regulations in order to implement approved school improvement plans. Liz McPike, editor of *American Educator*, introduced the 1987 O'Rourke interview with this description:

> The principles that underlie [the School Improvement Process] find strong support in both the literature describing the characteristics of effective schools--which says that each school is and must be allowed to be a separate culture--and in theories of modern management that emphasize the importance of decentralization, employee involvement in the decisions that affect their work, and the development of a feeling of `ownership' of those decisions (O'Rourke, 1987).

The notions of rigorous staff development, higher expectations for student achievement, autonomous school improvement planning, and collaborative planning which run throughout the teacher professionalization efforts are themes which were struck by

Purkey and Smith in their 1983 review of the effective schools literature. The programs reported here frequently were begun prior to the release of *A Nation At Risk* (National Commission, 1983) and antedated many of the accountability oriented state reform laws. They came to fruition, however, and gained attention in the later half of the 1980s, during the same period that the Chicago school reform movement was gaining strength. In particular, the efforts in Hammond, Dade County, and Pittsburgh all had direct impact upon the thinking of the reform activists who were instrumental in drafting the Chicago School Reform Act.

B. Using Market Pressures to Improve Schools via Enrollment Choice

During the late 1970s and early 1980s there was considerable agitation from some conservative political camps to dramatically change the formula for supporting public access to education. The key word in this debate was "vouchers". Drawing, in part, upon the experience of support for post-secondary education for veterans under the "G.I. Bill" following World War II, proponents suggested each child should be given a voucher, worth an appropriate amount of money, which he could use to attend any school of his choice. The school administration could then exchange the voucher for enough funds from the government to meet its tuition requirements. In this way, all children would be given the choice of what school to attend. Schools would compete for children. Bad schools would lose students, and good schools would grow. In this way, competition through the market place would generate a desire for improvement at the school level (Cf., Friedman & Friedman, 1981; Lieberman, 1989; and Coons & Sugarman, 1978).

Public school advocates saw vouchers as an attack upon the public school system. They charged it was a subversive attempt to siphon public funds into parochial schools. They charged that the public schools would be left with students who required high cost special services and with the poor who would not know how to find more adequate schools, while private schools creamed off the elite students from the public systems. Attempts to enact a federal voucher plan affecting Chapter I compensatory funding, amounting to about $600 per Chapter I eligible child, were soundly defeated in the U.S. Congress.

But the basic notion of market driven motivation for school improvement has not died. During the latter half of the 1980s, the effort focused on creating enrollment choice among public schools. Advocates noted that many school districts permitted some limited choice of enrollment among schools within the district, either for special purpose schools or for magnet schools. Magnet schools had frequently been associated with desegregation efforts. Schools were developed with special emphases to make them attractive to different groups of students. By controlling entrance, racially balanced schools could be created, based on student or family choices. Such voluntary desegregation programs often avoided the problems of forced busing. Critics pointed out, however, that such approaches not infrequently resulted in two tiered school systems which worked to the disadvantage of low

income and minority students (Moore & Davenport, 1989).

Enrollment choice among public schools was given a big boost with the release, in 1986, of a report from the National Governors' Association, entitled *Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education*. Among other reforms, the report urged that states should:

> Expand opportunities for students by adopting legislation permitting families to select from among kindergarten to twelfth grade public schools in the state. High school students should be able to attend accredited public postsecondary degree-granting institutions during their junior and senior years (National Governors' Association, 1986).

In 1985, Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpich introduced legislation allowing parents to choose what school their children might attend. That legislation did not pass, but juniors and seniors were allowed to attend post-secondary institutions for individual courses, with state support following them. In 1987, at risk 12 - 21 year-olds were permitted to enroll outside their home district. In 1988, the original legislation was passed, phasing in the right of all parents to exercise enrollment choice (Perpich, 1989). Several other states have passed similar legislation, including Iowa and Nebraska.

Two local choice plans have received considerable attention. Perhaps best known is the District 4 plan in New York's Spanish Harlem. Starting slowly with three small alternative schools in 1974, one of which was specifically designed for troubled youth, the district expanded to some 24 specialized schools in 1985. In 1989, the district served 14,000 students through sixteen regular elementary school programs, nine bilingual schools, twenty-three alternative schools, and two high schools in twenty-one buildings (Fliegel, 1989). Parents in the district may choose to send their children to any school in the district. During the same period, the percentage of students reading at or above grade level is reported to have increased from 16 percent to 62 percent. While advocates of choice frequently point to these achievement increases as the result of enrollment choice, I believe a better argument can be made that program differentiation, resulting from collaborative planning and resulting in teacher "ownership", as described by Purkey and Smith in the review of the effective schools literature, might be a better explanation. This supposition is supported by the fact that the alternative programs began in 1974, and student achievement grew apace, while districtwide enrollment choice did not come until the end of the period.

The other widely noted district choice plan is from Cambridge, Massachusetts. The city had 15 elementary schools and one comprehensive high school in 1980 when a districtwide enrollment choice plan was initiated, primarily for desegregation purposes. All parents chose which elementary school their child would attend. But the system is a controlled choice system, governed by racial quotas to assure racial balance in each school. In 1984, new superintendent Robert Peterkin introduced a systemwide planning process for improvement called the Key Results Plan, which won gradual acceptance. At the heart of

the planning process was Peterkin's commitment that "*...all children can learn*" (Peterkin & Jones, 1989; italics in original). In the 1984-85 school year, only 54 percent of Cambridge elementary students passed reading, math, and writing basic skills tests (California Test of Basic Skills); by 1987-88, 87 percent passed all three tests. The Cambridge system involved controlled enrollment choice, intensive staff development, and collaborative systemwide planning augmented by individual school planning. Its results were just beginning to be widely recognized as the Chicago School Reform Act was being crafted.

In passing, it should be noted that there were two major interdistrict enrollment plans in midwestern cities through much of the 1980s. One was in St. Louis and the other in Milwaukee. In both, students were exchanged between the city and the suburbs, with students theoretically moving in both directions. In both cases, student desegregation was the primary value in establishing the plans. In practice, in both cities, the primary movement was from the city to the suburbs. A voluntary exchange program had been included in the 1981 desegregation plan worked out for Chicago under a consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice. However, the interdistrict transfer provisions of the plan were never more than words on paper.

There have been two other developments in the arena of enrollment choice since the passage of the Chicago School Reform Act which should be acknowledged, though they obviously played no role in shaping the reform plan. Beginning with the Fall term of 1990, one percent of the lowest income students in Milwaukee, just under 1,000 students, will be eligible to receive vouchers worth $2,500 which can be used in any private, non-sectarian school. This plan was sponsored by Representative Polly Williams, a Black Milwaukee legislator, and supported by Governor Tommy Thompson. The plan survived an initial court challenge, and initial implementation began in September of 1990. In November of 1990, the plan was declared unconstitutional on the basis of a technicality in the manner in which the act was passed by the Wisconsin legislature.

Also in 1990, a very provocative attack upon the fundamental structure of public education in America was released by the normally liberal Brookings Institution. *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools* is authored by John Chubb and Terry Moe (1990) who predict that all of the previously discussed reforms are bound to fail because they do not address the fundamental cause of the bureaucratization of our educational system, namely the process of democratic control. On the basis of a study of some 500 schools and surveys of over 20,000 students, principals, and teachers, Chubb and Moe contend that the single most important factor in the ability of schools to promote student achievement is the degree of autonomy with which they operate. They suggest the only place autonomy is seen extensively in public schools is in small suburban systems. The other place it is found is in private schools. Their proposal is to radically revise the way in which schools are funded by allowing the state to charter schools, both public and private, to delegate authority directly to local schools, to allow parents to choose which of these schools their children will attend, and then to fund these chartered schools on the basis of their enrollment, with higher funding provided for disadvantaged students or those requiring specialized

educational programs. In short, Chubb and Moe are proposing to eliminate democratic control of the schools and replace it with a market driven funding approach which will encourage autonomy and effectiveness.

C. Parent Involvement Through School Based Management

While the American Federation of Teachers has been advocating a version of school based management which focuses upon teachers and principals sharing decision making at the school level, other efforts have focused upon involving parents in decision making about the programs and practices of local schools. In smaller school districts, parents have had easy access to school board members and have been able to influence decision making informally. Parents have been quite capable of organizing caucuses to contest for school board seats when they felt board members were not being responsive to their concerns. However, in larger districts, parent power was not as easily exercised.

One of the themes of the War on Poverty was the empowering of the poor themselves. One of the architects of the poverty effort, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, produced a stunning critique of the effort to empower community residents, which he suggests was doomed from the start, in his essay, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding* (1969). While Moynihan does not dwell on the education aspects of the poverty bill, he notes the contradiction between those who sought participation of the poor in planning how federal funds would be spent and those seeking to retain control of spending on the poor. One of the outgrowths of this effort was the mandatory establishment of parent advisory councils at schools receiving federal compensatory education funding. While in many places these advisory councils became rubber stamps for program decisions made by principals or other administrators, they did create a pattern of parent advisory councils in the urban centers of America.

Parent advisory councils grew up in a number of cities. Perhaps the most extensive utilization of these councils was in Salt Lake City. There Superintendent Donald Thomas encouraged advisory panels at every school and focused their attention on making collaborative decisions which would lead towards school improvement. On non-substantial items, the councils seemed to work quite smoothly. But on critical issues, parent influence was considerably diminished, according to those who studied the system closely (Malen & Ogawa, 1988).

Perhaps the most cogent argument for school based management, with significant parent involvement, is made by Carl Marburger (1985), formerly Commissioner of Education for the state of New Jersey. Marburger quotes a representative of the Breward County, Florida school system which was already engaged in school based management:

> School based management is a form of *district* (and state) organization

and management in which the school-community system is the *key unit* for educational change and improvement....

> Administrative decentralization, in general, is marked by moving authority for certain functions to different parts of an organization, while retaining power centrally. Political decentralization involves changing the power distribution. While relinquishing power appears to be giving up total power, experience indicates that the total system gains in power, and those at the top can get more results (Marburger, 1985:25).

Marburger advocated the establishment of school management councils which were equally balanced between parents and school professionals. In his view, school based management was based on a collaborative approach entered into voluntarily. Support from the superintendent of schools was a requirement. Marburger was actively involved in promoting his ideas about school based management, working, among others, with schools in St. Louis and New York City. *One School At A Time* was a primer for encouraging more school districts to embark upon this effort. School reformers in Chicago met with Marburger several times to discuss possibilities for Chicago, but ultimately rejected the voluntary approach and eventually designed councils in which lay members would hold a substantial majority. Similarly, in Great Britain, the national government mandated the establishment of Local School Management, giving parents a substantially increased role in the governing bodies, though not a majority.

II. Comparing Chicago and Britain

School based management (SBM) was established in Chicago through the adoption of the Chicago School Reform Act (P.A. 85-1418) in December of 1988. Under the legislation, a set of five year goals was established which would have Chicago students achieving at national norms on standardized tests, attending school at rates comparable to other districts in the state, and graduating from high school in similar proportions as their peers across the nation. A second, often overlooked, feature of the act required a reduction in administrative costs and a redistribution of the system's resources to the school level and more equitably among schools. The third provision of the act established Local School Councils at every school to be the primary governance units of the school system. The councils were first elected in October of 1989 and are now completing their first two year terms.[1] The Local School Councils' major powers are to adopt a school improvement plan,

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[1] On November 30, 1990, the Illinois Supreme Court announced its opinion that the act was unconstitutional because the election mechanism for the Local School Councils violated the one person-one vote principle under the federal constitution. On January 8, 1991, the Illinois General Assembly reenacted the legislation, providing that the current LSCs and Board of Education be appointed by the mayor

to adopt a school budget, and to select a principal to serve under a four year performance contract.

Local school management (LMS) was empowered in Great Britain under the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 and the Education Reform Act 1988. However, the roots of LMS date to the Education Act 1902, when governing bodies for each school were first mandated. A 1975 study by Lord Taylor of Blackburn recommended these governing councils should include parents, teachers, and representatives of the community in addition to representatives of the Local Education Authority (comparable to the school district Board of Education in America). These recommendations were first incorporated into the Education Act 1980, but were not fully empowered until the Acts of 1986 and 1988.[2]

A. Comparing the Sources of the Parent Empowerment Efforts

Both the Chicago and British reform efforts differ from most of the professionalization efforts at decentralizing decision-making in that they are based in legal mandates imposed upon local education agencies. In the Chicago case, the state legislature responded to pressure from an array of citizen and business groups to adopt legislation dramatically altering the roles and responsibilities of both state and local educational professionals. In the British case, the national government mandated the delegation of authority and revenues from the control of local education authorities to newly balanced governing councils at the school level. In both cases, parents were given important new powers in local decision-making by higher governmental bodies.

The important common element is that higher levels of government were mandating changes in the roles and responsibilities of those previously in charge of education at the local level, and installing new local governors to be "in charge" at the school level. Thus, school based management was installed by outside forces in both the Chicago and British cases. This is in significant opposition to shared decision making established by the actions of local education authorities, usually in collaboration with representatives of the educational professionals in those school systems. Parent empowerment was established by

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of the City of Chicago; the newly appointed LSCs will govern until October, 1991. A new election mechanism must be enacted by July 1, 1991 as the basis for elections in October.

[2] I am indebted to Christina Bienkowska from the Department of Education and Science in London for providing reference materials and much of my understanding of the background of the British education reform effort. The astute reader will also see certain parallels with Cooper (1990) in the comparison of Chicago and the British reform efforts, though this paper is built from a different data source and examines the comparisons from a different perspective and for a different purpose.

outside legal mandates, while professional empowerment was more characteristically established by insider agreements.

The difference between the source of action in Chicago and Britain should also be noted. In Chicago, it was an aroused citizenry, using the vehicle of an education summit convened by the city's mayor, and given momentum by the city's longest teacher strike, which designed the major elements of the school reform legislation. While a number of legislators, particularly the chair of the Senate Education Committee and the Speaker of the House, played important roles in steering the legislation to enactment, most of the ideas, and much of the language in the bill came from representatives of the citizens groups. These local activists knew, firsthand, the problems they were trying to address and fashioned elements in the legislation designed directly at locally perceived problems in one large urban school system. These activists relied heavily upon educational research on effective schools and on their knowledge of educational innovations related to decentralization which were being undertaken elsewhere.[3] In Britain, it was the ruling national Conservative Party, frustrated with years of resistence by teacher unions who were more closely aligned with the opposition party, which designed the reforms and imposed them upon local authorities.

In both cases, however, the motivation was similar. In both cases, the reformers were concerned that student achievement standards had eroded and that expectations by students and parents that they would receive a quality education were not being met (Hess, 1991 and Central Office of Information, 1989). Chicago reformers, while alert to the issue, were less concerned than their British counterparts about international business competitiveness and the consequent need for qualified school graduates. But the concerns of the Chicago business community for qualified future employees was a major factor in business support for the citizens' reform movement. As might be expected, the goals of the British national policy were broader in scope: "...to raise standards at all levels of ability, increase parental choice, make further and higher education more widely accessible and more responsive to the needs of the economy, and achieve the best possible return from the resources invested in the education service" (Central Office of Information, 1989:1). The Chicago School Reform Act had ten goals (quoted in Hess, 1991) which, as indicated above, essentially call for Chicago students to perform at average national standards.

B. Common Themes in Chicago and Britain

1. There are a series of common themes in the educational reforms enacted for Chicago and Britain. One of the most important of these themes involves the context of school based management undertaken in these two cases. In each case, **school management entails a devolution of authority from a larger, bureaucratic educational jurisdiction to**

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[3] I have described this background to the development of the Chicago School Reform Act in more detail in *School Restructuring: Chicago Style*, Corwin Press, 1991.

local educational units. In Chicago, the mandating legislation clearly articulated the premise that the local school was to become "...the essential unit for educational governance and improvement..."(P.A. 85-1418, Sec. 34, 1.01-B). Thus, the focus of governance and of efforts to improve public education in the city was to shift from the central Board of Education, which had previously exercised authority over the system's 542 schools and 410,000 students, to the school level.

Similarly, in Britain, "The Education (No 2) Act 1986 makes provision for reform of the composition of school governing bodies and reallocation of functions between school governors, local education authorities...and head teachers..."(Central Office of Information, 1989:2). The intent was that student achievement levels would be "...raised by improving school management, securing a broader and more balanced curriculum..., encouraging schools to be more responsive to the needs of a multi-ethnic society, reforming the public examination system and improving the quality of teaching...."(Central Office, 1989:1). The Education Reform Act 1988 further decentralized by providing "...for the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA - a central body providing education for inner London boroughs)..."(Central Office, 1989:8). Thus, the major urban school system was broken into 13 borough units at the same time that major authority was devolved to the school level. British schools, in 1988-89, enrolled some 6.7 million students in 109 county or borough LEAs. Thus, the average LEA would have been responsible for about 62,000 students and probably included as many as 200 schools. However, LEAs vary significantly. The City of London, one of the 13 boroughs, contains only one school. Other county LEAs cover large geographic areas and may contain as many as twice the average number of students. Thus, in both Chicago and Britain, authority was being reallocated from a large central educational bureaucracy to the school level.

2. In both Chicago and Britain, authority was not only being devolved from a higher to a lower level, it was also being more widely dispersed, with particular concern to empower parents. In Chicago, Local School Councils are composed of 11 members, six of whom are parents who are not employed by the school system. Under the original legislation, only parents of children enrolled in the school voted for these parent members of the LSCs. However, on November 30, 1990, the Illinois Supreme Court, while affirming the intent of the legislature to make LSCs the essential unit of governance, struck down the election process for violating the one person-one vote provisions of the federal constitution. On January 8, 1991, the General Assembly re-enacted the reform act with a temporary provision allowing the mayor of the city to appoint the existing members of the LSCs. A new voting mechanism that allows all voters to vote for all classes of members of the LSCs must be adopted before July 1, 1991. The Court did not require a change in the constitution of the parent-dominated membership of the LSCs (six parents, two community representatives, two teachers, and the principal).

In Britain, the 1986 act also intended to increase the power of parents in affecting the governance of the nation's schools. The act did not go as far as the Chicago reforms, however. The school governing bodies would have equal representation from parents and

appointees of the LEA (i.e., representatives of the district's governing board) along with one or more teachers and the head teacher (principal). The governing body would co-opt additional members, including representatives of the local business community, to serve on the board of governors.[4] While parent representation on the governing bodies is not dominant, it was an important aspect of the British reform effort. "Granting parents and employers and individual educational establishments greater decision-making powers...will, in the Government's view, help in this process" (Central Office, 1989:1).

3. A third commonality is the **concern for the disadvantaged**, particularly in urban areas. Serving disadvantaged students better was central to the Chicago effort. The reform act allocated additional resources to schools on the basis of their enrollments of disadvantaged students. As one of the reform-minded principals told a planning retreat of reform activists, "School reform is for the lowest third of our students" (Hess, 1991:271). The goals of the reform act were more pointedly focused for the schools with current achievement scores far below the national norms.

In Britain, specific provisions of the mandating acts created additional educational opportunities for secondary school students in disadvantaged urban areas. A new network of city technology schools was established and funded directly by the national government. A concerted effort was mounted to keep students in school until age 18 with a new Certificate of Pre-vocational Education offered to such students. Previously, many disadvantaged students ended their schooling at age 16.

4. In both Chicago and Britain, efforts were made to *equalize funding* available to students in different schools. In Chicago, a provision of the reform act mandated that basic funding be equalized at all schools (P.A. 85-1418, Sec. 34A-412.a.8) and another requires that the funds provided for disadvantaged students be used as discretionary supplementary spending to the equalized basic programs (P.A. 85-1418, Sec. 18-8). Combined with a limitation on non-instructional spending, the resource reallocation provision moved $40 million from central office expenditures to the school level, giving the average elementary school $90,000 in new discretionary spending in the first year of implementation of reform.

In Britain, stringent budget regulations were imposed upon LEAs to force them to disburse 85 percent of their non-capital budget to local schools. Further, schools would receive that funding on a formula basis, 75 percent of which would be determined by pupil enrollments weighted by age. In addition, school governing boards were given explicit authority to purchase services and supplies locally.

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[4] In schools under 300 students, there would be one teacher and four co-optees; in those between 300 and 599, there would be two teachers and five co-optees. About a third of state supported British schools are sponsored by voluntary bodies; in those schools three or four of the co-optees would be representatives of the sponsor.

5. **Budget control** passed to the local level in both Chicago and Britain. In both settings, the local school governing boards adopt their own budgets, and to some extent, set staffing levels and have control of the hiring and firing of staff. This is more extensive in Britain that in Chicago, where union student-staff ratio agreements limit the flexibility of LSCs. In addition, Chicago LSCs directly hire the principal, but it is the principal who has authority to choose new staff to fill open positions. While there was some relaxation of termination procedures, principals are still severely constrained in dismissing teachers already assigned to a school when reform began. British schools appear to have more flexibility on staff employment and are directly involved in employment decisions for all staff.

6. One major element of the British reforms is the establishment of a National Curriculum. The National Curriculum will eventually occupy at least 70 percent of teaching time but is being phased in in stages. The Curriculum includes "attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment arrangements" for the core subjects of English, mathematics, and science as well as for other foundation subjects such as history, music, and foreign languages (for secondary level pupils). While the exact form the curriculum will take is still not clear, it may be similar to the Chicago mandate that the central Board of Education will establish learning objectives for all grades but leave the methods of achieving those objectives to the discretion of local schools. In this sense, both Chicago and Britain **establish common objectives but allow schools to take different paths** to reach those objectives.

C. Differences between Chicago and Britain

There are a number of areas in which the Chicago and British experiments differ. One major one gives British schools the right to "opt out" of the control of the Local Education Authority under which they were previously governed and be directly funded by the national government. This option is available to all secondary schools and primary schools with more than 300 students, if a majority of the parents concur. The governing body of these new "grant-maintained" schools would include five parent governors, an equivalent number of local community representatives, one or two teachers, and the head teacher. The LEA would no longer be represented. Thus, parents would have even greater influence in grant-maintained schools. As of 1989, 26 applications had been approved for grant-maintained status (Central Office, 1989:4). The Chicago School Reform Act has no such opportunity for Chicago schools to assume a direct relationship to the state.

The British reforms also speak explicitly about expanding enrollment choice for parents as "...introducing elements of competition as a spur to quality wherever possible..." (Central Office, 1989:1). It must be remembered that one third of the government supported schools are sponsored by voluntary (frequently religious) bodies, already providing extensive enrollment options. The major mechanism for expanded choice is forcing all schools to accept all pupils who apply, up to the limit of their physical capacity. Additional choices will result from the introduction of the technology "colleges" in disadvantaged urban

areas. In Chicago, the Board of Education is mandated to offer, on a phased-in basis starting in 1991, "...the opportunity for families within the school district to apply for enrollment of their children in any attendance center within the school district..." (P.A. 85-1418, Sec. 34-18.7). However, a mandated study by the State Board of Education suggested that only a locally determined choice plan would be appropriate, and the new Superintendent of Schools has indicated to the overseeing Chicago School Finance Authority that the system's intent relative to choice is to see that every school becomes an excellent school.

A third difference is in the expected diversity in the curriculum under school based management. In Chicago, it is clearly expected that schools will adopt dramatically different curricula in seeking to improve the educational achievement of their students. Already, in the second year of implementation, some schools have adopted quite different curricula, the most dramatic of which is the Portland model of Afro-centric studies. While the British National Curriculum might embrace very diverse curricular approaches, it seems unlikely that the degree of diversity will be as broad as that likely to occur in Chicago.

There are also some significant differences in budgetary approaches. In Britain, the funding distribution is strictly on the basis of funds per pupil, with some accomodation for different needs for facilities, special needs of students, and accomodations for small schools. In Chicago, resources are distributed first on a teacher-unit basis, with additional discretionary funding initially assigned on a dollars per pupil basis which can then be converted into teacher positions on the basis of the average teacher costs. The difference means that, in Britain, governing boards must weigh the advantages of fewer, more experienced (and therefore more costly) teachers over more (and cheaper) less experienced teachers. In Chicago, Local School Councils do not have that staffing option, but school principals have the advantage of employing teachers of any experience level.

British schools have the opportunity to determine what needs they should meet to maintain their premises, and how they should contract to meet those needs. Similarly, they may determine from whom they should purchase needed supplies or services. The Chicago School Reform Act does not mandate a local purchasing option for Local School Councils. A pilot project in local purchasing was conducted by the chief purchasing agent, with the announced intent of expanding the pilot systemwide. However, after the arrival of the new Superintendent, the purchasing agent was fired, and the purchasing functions were recentralized. In Britain, schools are encouraged to "rent" their facilities to agencies providing services beyond those to elementary and secondary students (5-11 and 11 - 16 or 18, respectively). Thus, adult education and pre-school programs must be provided by other agencies which must pay their own costs for utilizing the facility. On the other hand, local school governing boards have the right to extend to other groups the use of their facilities, adding the income from such rentals to their total income. In Chicago, LSCs are contending with the central administration over their right to control the use of their facilities during non-school hours, and any rental revenues are claimed by the central administration.

In Britain, governing bodies are given the right to purchase support services either from private suppliers or from the LEA. If school personnel feel they can get better service from outside suppliers, they are free to use their resources to purchase them. If the LEA can provide the same service more cheaply, schools are free to utilize their offerings. While such approaches have been discussed in Chicago, they are not mandated in the law and the administration has not yet seen fit to incorporate such an approach.

III. Issues in Comparing Various Approaches to School Based Management

For all their differences, in scope (national vs. one urban center) and detail, the reform efforts in Chicago and Britain are quite similar. They both rely upon greater empowerment of parents as the major strategy for inducing school professionals to improve the quality of education available to enrolled students. By adopting this strategy, they are closer to those who claim greater utilization of market forces, particularly by expanding enrollment choice, is necessary to improve our schools. Both Chicago and Britain are somewhat removed from the suggestion that empowering school personnel is the way to improvement.

There are several areas of concern, in comparing these diverse approaches, which should be examined more closely. The first of these is the ultimate criteria for judging the relative success of these different approaches. For this author, improvement in the levels of student achievement is one of the most important of these criteria. There are a number of ways of measuring student achievement, including scores on standardized tests, graduation rates, promotion rates, attendance rates, and misbehavior rates. More qualitative measures, such as portfolio assessments, are now being developed which may improve the ability to assess levels of student achievement. However it is measured, one primary criteria for the success of school reform efforts is the effect on student achievement.

To date, there is little evidence that school based management, in any of its manifestations, can be directly linked to improvements in student achievement. Both the Chicago and British reforms are too newly implemented to expect any significant change in student achievement levels. In Chicago, the first year of implementation was primarily a planning year, though schools did receive some additional resources. Similarly, new governing and funding mechanisms have only just begun in Britain, and it is too early to expect to see significant changes in school programs, let alone see results from those changes.

The longest operating school based management schemes of recent vintage, excluding the Salt Lake City experiment (Cf. Malen & Ogawa, 1988), are the Hammond, Indiana and Dade County (Miami) teacher professionalization efforts. In Hammond, all schools have been participating in shared decision making for several years. In Dade County, as of 1989, less than half the system's schools were involved in the initial stages of school based decision making. Based on interviews of 51 persons at 17 schools, two recent investigators concluded

that the Dade County effort had affected structure more than it had instruction or student achievement (Rungeling and Glover, 1991).

More significant claims to improving student achievement have been made for reform initiatives in Pittsburgh, Cambridge (Massachusetts), and New York's East Harlem (District 4). In Pittsburgh, Superintendent Richard Wallace (1986) claims that curriculum readjustment and retraining of all teaching personnel have resulted in student test scores moving from as far below national norms as those in Chicago to the 60th percentile. Similarly, in Cambridge and East Harlem student scores have increased dramatically, though administrators in both cases ascribe the difference to expanded enrollment choice (Peterkin & Jones, 1989; Fliegel, 1989). To date, there is little systematic data showing widespread improvement in student achievement from statewide choice programs, most of which are also only recently implemented. The most radical of the choice programs, Milwaukee's voucher plan, has only been in operation a matter of months and incorporates too few pupils (less than 500) to demonstrate much more than the legal issues involved in establishing such a plan.

An issue closely related to the question of improving student achievement levels is whether shared decision making approaches which focus on empowering educational professionals will ever impact on student achievement. There is the very real possibility that teachers will be more concerned to use their new roles in decision making to assure better working conditions for themselves, regardless of the impact on students. Inherent in such questions is the internal conflict between reform initiatives designed to enhance the professional status of teachers and the heritage of many teacher unions which have frequently been more identified with blue collar worker concerns than those of a professional association.

A frequently noted problem in shared decision making, the lack of planning time for teachers, may be a prime example of such a conflict. As Brown notes (1990:173, citing Alexandruk, 1985:49), "When teachers were asked to nominate *weaknesses* of school-based management....leading the drawbacks was the *time demands*, mentioned by 22 per cent of teachers"(*emphasis in the original*). In Chicago, many parents and some principals have complained loudly about teachers who bolt out the school door only minutes after their students leave, but then complain that school based management is demanding too much time. One of the conflicts between professionalization and blue collar unionism is the attitude towards time. For those professionals not billing clients for their time, professionalism frequently means working to the needs of the job, regardless of the time involved. Such professionals regularly work more than 40 hours per week without additional compensation. Such professionals are being compensated for their skills and what they accomplish, not for the hours they sell their employers. By contrast, most unionized blue collar workers sell their time, and negotiate over what they should be expected to accomplish during that time. Additional time is sold at an additional price. How teachers and school systems resolve this conflict over time will indicate much about the potential for professionalization approaches to school improvement.

It should be noted that most client empowerment approaches to restructuring start from a position of some antipathy towards teacher unions. Choice notions are frequently associated with explicitly anti-union postures. In America, they frequently make the comparison that private schools educate for significantly lower costs than do public schools and imply that an open market system would, therefore, be less costly. Essentially, that posture is a de-unionization position, though frequently unacknowledged as such. To their credit, Chubb and Moe are more explicit in their argument that teacher unions are one of the primary problems in public education, driving up costs, forcing incentive deadening work rules, structuring the teaching role in overly rigid ways, and depriving principals of managerial discretion (1990:48f). Similarly, both the Chicago and British parent empowering school based management schemes grew out of frustration with union activities and both emphasize local accountability to parents and community representatives by educational professionals. Thus, one sharp difference between the professionalization model and the client empowerment model of school based management is in their attitudes towards educational professionals. Can they be empowered to surmount the classic limitations of blue collar union-management confrontation or should they be challenged to be more creative by holding them more closely accountable to their clients?

Correspondingly, a question which must be answered by the client empowerment model of school based management is whether the potential client-professional confrontation can be managed in such a way as to win the collaboration of professionals in seeking to improve what happens in classrooms. Ultimately, improvement in education must involve changes in the way in which teachers and students are interacting. If principals and teachers are not enlisted as active partners in the school improvement process, it is unlikely that much significant change will happen in the classroom (Cf. McLaughlin, 1978).

However, behind both of these concerns about the interactions of professionals in the school improvement process lies the question, "Will professionals know what to do to improve schools?" This author's personal experiences with school level educators prompts more skepticism than optimism on this question, despite the fact that there are some very creative and knowledgeable teachers in the Chicago Public Schools. Outside observers have come to a similar conclusion. Chester Finn and Stephen Clements have been periodically observing the implementation of school reform in Chicago and, on the basis of contacts with a small group of schools, raise the following caution:

> What concerns us is whether this new system, once fully born, will be able to put into place a radically altered educational vision, a profoundly different set of ideas about teaching and learning, school organization and process, curriculum and pedagogy, student assessment and parent participation. (Finn & Clements, 1990).

It is to this point that the Pittsburgh plan is so applicable. With leadership from the top of the administration, the school system in Pittsburgh set out to completely retrain its professionals *before* it embarked upon school based management. It assured itself that its

professionals had been exposed to better ways of operating schools before it asked these professionals to take over their management in more autonomous ways. It must be noted that one of the preconditions for the professionalization model to work, whether in Pittsburgh or in Hammond or Miami or San Diego or New York, is that there must be top ranking professionals who are willing to risk greatly in order to improve their schools. Where such leadership is lacking, citizens might be forced to take action themselves. When they do, a client empowerment approach is more likely to be adopted.

One further notable difference between professionalization models and parent empowerment models is the issue of devolution of authority. There is nothing inherent in the professionalization model which requires altering the current levels at which various decisions are made. There are various mechanisms through which various types of professionals may be included in the decision making process at all levels of a school system without changing the locus of authority within the hierarchy (i.e., teachers and principals might be involved in districtwide governing committees which still make decisions affecting all schools in the system). In fact, in most professionalization models, there is relatively little new authority invested in school level decision making and rarely is there any significant reallocation of funding. In both the Chicago and British reforms, a conscious effort was made to reallocate resources to the school level and to attend to the equitability of the resources available at each school. While there is nothing in the professionalization model which would prevent the devolution of authority and resources, neither is it implicit in the approach that such would happen.

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